

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. BOYLSTON.

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It is not necessary to the faculty that the whole forehead should be prominent ; the mere front is sufficient. If the upper part of the forehead be prominent, or an elevated ridge traverse it horizontally, it is called by Gall the organ of metaphysics, but his pupil, Dr. Spurzheim, who has refined upon his theory, considers the lateral prominences as indicative of the relation between cause and effect, "while the centre elevation compares, the side ones reflect on cause and effect."

32. Organ of wit. It is situated in the lateral part, and should be prominent over the eyes, as appeared in Sterne, who is painted with his finger on this organ.

33. Organ of imitation. It was discovered by Gall, on examining the skull of a great player who had a deep furrow on the top of his forehead—the bust of Shakspeare has this organ strongly marked.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

DR. BOYLSTON.

It is a legitimate ground of national exultation, that, while in other countries those new inventions and improvements which add to the comforts, or mitigate the ills, of life, commonly make their way slowly against the opposition of prejudice and individual interest ; here they are scarcely known before they become universal. Among hundreds of instances of various kinds which might be given, we need only to mention steam navigation, the practice of vaccination, the improvements of the criminal code, the penitentiary system, and the modern practice in cases of insanity. It is remarkable that this has always been, in some degree, a national characteristic ; and one of the most curious facts of our colonial history is, that the practice of inoculation, for the small pox, was introduced into common use in this country from the east, at a time when in Europe, and especially in England, it was confined to very narrow limits, and generally viewed with suspicious dislike. Though the history of this invention is familiar to the antiquarians of Massachusetts, yet, as it is much less generally known elsewhere than it deserves to be, I have drawn up from

various sources* a sketch of the life of Zabdiel Boylston, that liberal and enlightened physician, to whose zeal and courage in the cause of humanity, our country is chiefly indebted for this early introduction of the practice of small-pox inoculation.

Zabdiel Boylston was born at Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1684. He never enjoyed the advantages of a learned education, but after acquiring a considerable stock of miscellaneous knowledge from private instruction, studied medicine under the care of Dr. Butler, a respectable physician and surgeon of Boston. In a few years he acquired the reputation of great skill in his profession, rose into extensive practice, and accumulated a fortune very considerable for those times. In 1721, when the small-pox desolated the town of Boston, and filled the whole country with alarm and terror, Dr. Cotton Mather, a man of extensive knowledge and general curiosity, pointed out to the physicians of Boston, an account of the practice of inoculation for small-pox, as used in the east, contained in a volume of the transactions of the royal society. This communication was received with great contempt by the whole of the faculty, who had probably come to the resolution of the physicians in Moliere, always to follow the ancient practice, whether good or bad; *essere in omnibus consultationibus ancienni advisi aut boni aut mauvaisi*; with the single exception of Dr. Boylston. Although this practice was unexampled in America, and not known to have been introduced in Europe, he immediately inoculated his own son, a child of six years of age, and two servants. Encouraged by the success of this experiment, he began to extend his practice. This innovation was received with a universal clamour of invective and opposition. The physicians of the town gave their unanimous opinion against it, and the selectmen of Boston passed an ordinance to prohibit it. A Scotch physician, Dr. Douglass, a man of narrow mind and malignant passions, particularly distinguished himself by his abuse of Dr. Boylston, whom he denounced as a bold, ignorant, and most dangerous quack. But supported by a strong conviction of the great utility of this invention, and the firm support of several liberal and intelligent clergymen, he persevered; and in the course of the years 1721 and 1722, inoculated with his own hand

* Mass. Historical Collections, Holmes' Annals, Elliott's Dict. Allen's Biograph. Dict.

247 persons ; thirty-nine more were inoculated by others, and of the whole number, (286,) only six died. During the same period of 5759, who had the small-pox the natural way, 844, nearly one seventh, died. Still, however, Douglass and his partisans continued to inflame the public against their benefactor by virulent publications and furious declamation. They argued that his practice was nothing more than wilfully spreading contagion, a crime equivalent to that of poisoning—that as the disease was a judgment from God upon the sins of the people, all attempts to avert it would but provoke him the more ; and, forgetting that the argument would extend to any exercise of their own profession, they even contended, that as there was a time appointed unto every man for death, it was impious to attempt to stay or to avert the stroke. Religious bigotry, being thus called into action, in addition to the feelings of personal malignity, so exasperated many of the ignorant against Dr. Boylston, that attempts were threatened against his life, and it became unsafe for him to leave his house after dusk. Time and experience at length came in to the aid of truth, opposition died away, and at last the rancorous Douglass reluctantly declared himself a convert to the new practice, without, however, having the magnanimity to confess the merit of Dr. Boylston. Boylston had the satisfaction of seeing inoculation in general use in New-England for some time before it became common in Great Britain.

In 1725, he visited England, where he was received with the most marked attention from the learned and scientific of the metropolis. He was elected a fellow of the royal society, and contracted an acquaintance and friendship with many distinguished men, particularly with the pious and learned Dr. Watts, with whom he corresponded during the remainder of his life. Upon his return he continued at the head of his profession for many years ; he yet found time for literary and philosophical pursuits, and contributed several valuable papers to the transactions of the royal society. He died March 1st, 1766.

His only publications, beside his communications to the royal society, are “ Some account of what is said of inoculating or transplanting the small pox, by the learned Dr. Emanuel Timonius and Jac. Pylarinus,” a pamphlet, Boston, 1721, and “ An historical account of the small-pox, inoculated in New-England,” &c. London, 1726.

MISCELLANEOUS SELECTIONS.

HINT FOR A ROMANCE.

From the Morning Chronicle—Dec. 3, 1814.

[From the initials, and the prefatory lines, it appears that the author of this fragment is Moore, the poet.]

THE following sportive bagatelle was penned some years ago by the most distinguished amatory and Anacreontic writer of the present day.

THE LAMP OF ST. AGATHA.

Sanctos restinguere fontibus ignes.—Virg.

"Till the lamp in the cell of St. Agatha is extinguished, never can the house of Malvezzi be at peace."—Such, said the guide, were the prophetic words which the hermit of the mountain uttered before he died.—He was a man of strange and mysterious habits, and many were the wonders which he performed in his cave. He could dress a talisman (say the legends of those times) as expertly as Messahallah, Albohazen, or any other Arabian impostor.

Like the great little Albert he could teach a serpent to speak Greek, and make a salamander say his prayers like Porphyry. When he lay upon his bed of rushes expiring, just before the last gleam of life was out, his eyes seemed to glow with more than mortal animation, and he pronounced these words, with a voice not of this world:—"Till the lamp in the cell of St. Agatha is extinguished, never can the house of Malvezzi be in peace."

"Here," said the guide, pointing to some fragment of stone, which rudely peeped forth from a wilderness of weeds, "here are the ruins of the abbey, which adjoined the castle of Malvezzi; and here was the cell of St. Agatha, where the fatal lamp lay burning. Near a century had elapsed from the period of the hermit's prediction, and still the house of Malvezzi was convulsed by bloody dissensions. Father against son, and brother against brother, conflicted with unrelenting ferocity, and murder was almost sated with its victims?"—"But did they not remember the prophecy of the hermit?" said the youthful stranger, who appeared most interested in the tale, and to whom the guide particularly addressed himself.—"But did they not remember the prophecy of the hermit?"

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